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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 215

that could happen in his young political career is to be branded in this fashion. He could say that he misspoke when he stated that he favors discrimination based on sexual orientation. But I pointed out that when you take action that underscores what you stated is your position, then you cannot argue that you misspoke, anymore than George Wallace, when he was standing in the doorway to the school house barring black children, could say, I'm not in favor of discriminating against black children. Had Senator Smith not spoken this morning and left the record cloudy, I would not have spoken. When you read the letter that Mr. Gale, who is Secretary of State, and also the Chairman of the Real Estate Commission told you how much work has gone into this bill, the important issues that are being addressed and the need to get the bill passed should be listened to rather than Senator Smith, who has been caught in the clutches of some very hateful people. Senator Smith says there is no need to pass this bill this year. The Board of Realtors believes otherwise, the Nebraska Real Estate Commission believes otherwise, the realtors quoted in the article that I gave you believe otherwise, and they say the amendment is not a problem for them. But this comment that I was going to tell you that was made by the director of Catholic Charities in Omaha, this is a teaching device as well as a worthwhile amendment on its own. If this bill is enacted into law, as I believe it will be, not only will there be a motto for this state that says "equality before the law", this will be a concrete act by the Legislature to show that it believes in that motto and that the least of those of our brothers and sisters ought to be the ones that we are concerned about, the least of our brothers and sisters should be entitled to seek shelter without facing immoral discrimination. This bill makes it illegal as it ought to be. Senator Smith had his name on a bill that dealt with the homeless. And I wonder if he wants the provisions in that bill to exclude gay and lesbian people? The law is for everybody in Nebraska, except...I don't believe that is a position of the Legislature. I have no concerns about this bill being passed, but I had told Senator Smith that if he said nothing I would say nothing. But he spoke, and I cannot let the record of this bill exist in a form where comments were made by Senator Smith which, if left unanswered, could seem to be true. There is urgency about this bill. The people who began to write letters did not think we